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MYRTIE MOSELEY

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A STREET IN THE SUNNY BAHAMAS.

MYRTIE MOSELEY

AND HER FRIENDS.

A STORY OF THE BAHAMA ISLANDS.

By the Author of "The Story of Mollie Malone."

NEW YORK:
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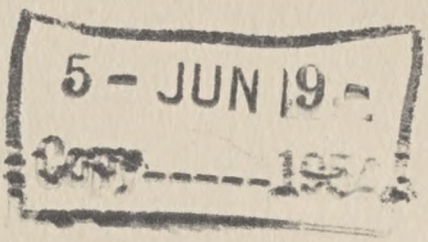

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INTRODUCTION.

THE incidents that go to make up the twelve chapters of this little book are substantially true, though it is not claimed that they all occurred just in the order and connection in which they have been related. Some such sort of fictitious connection must necessarily be resorted to, else the book would be merely a collection of short stories. To avoid giving personal offence, names of persons and places are also fictitious. But the characters, conversations, descriptions etc. are, we believe, neither over-drawn, nor colored; but, as nearly as possible, true to life. They are largely the result of the writer's personal experiences and observations during a residence of more than two years in the Islands.

We trust it may prove both instructive and interesting, and may the Good Shepherd, who loves to gather the lambs in His arms, make it a blessing to many youthful hearts.

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MYRTIE MOSELEY AND HER FRIENDS.

A STORY OF THE BAHAMA ISLANDS.

CHAPTER I.

The Glass Window.

THE morning of May 24th, 18—, dawned, cloudless, and calm over the little town of Dunmore, in the Bahamas. The Bahama Islands belong to Great Britain and all loyal inhabitants of the colony are careful to observe May 24th, as the birthday of their late beloved queen. At the time of the opening of our story she was, of course, still living, and most of the inhabitants of Dunmore, especially the children, were up bright and early to celebrate the anniversary of their sovereign's birth.

Many of my young readers will wish to know why the children, particularly, were up with the sun that bright May morning. I will tell you. Mr. Wood, the master of the board-school, had arranged a treat on that day for the scholars of the school and others. They were to take luncheon baskets and spend the day at a place some distance off called the "Glass Window." Now I know that all bright boys and girls are full of questions, and if any of you ask me why it was called the Glass Window, I must confess I cannot tell. It is, or *was* rather (for it has since been broken down by a hurricane) a large hole that pierced a cliff of soft, coral limestone overlooking the sea. It resembled a window enough to merit the latter part of its name, but why it was ever called the *Glass* Window, I suppose nobody

knows. Even the windows of most of the houses of Dunmore (like nearly all in the Bahamas) have no glass in them. "Mermaid's Window" or some such poetic name would have been much more appropriate and less commonplace. But we must leave the good people of the Bahamas to answer their own questions as to the why and wherefore of the origin of this and other seemingly meaningless names pertaining to their sunny archipelago, and go on with our story.

Some of the boys were a little disappointed when they wakened to find it calm ("glass calm" the Bahamian sailors say) as the Glass Window was on an island some distance off and had to be reached in sail-boats. But a slight breeze sprang up as the sun rose, and the children were soon sailing merrily over

the bay. On reaching the place of landing, they took their baskets, books, and other things, and were soon at the cliff. The Window looked toward the east and a delightful breeze called the "trade wind" was blowing from that direction. There was no beach near, so the smaller children of the party could not build castles or forts in the sand, neither could the older boys go bathing. But they found other things to do and play at. Some lay or sat in the shade of the rocks and read the books they had brought with them. A number of girls wrought at their "Spanish work," to be sold, if possible, to the American visitors at Nassau the coming winter. Quite a number of boys were fishing with hook and line at the dizzy edge of the cliff.

So the first few hours of their outing passed away very pleasantly. But they

little dreamed how suddenly their play was to end, and their joy be turned to mourning. In the midst of their chatting and songs and laughter a cry of alarm was suddenly raised, "A tidal wave! Run for your lives!" But alas, the warning came too late for some. The cry of terror was hardly uttered, when there was a deep roar and a "swish," as a monster sea came rushing up the almost perpendicular face of the cliff, and rushed hissing through the Window in the wall. It broke and scattered and was gone almost as suddenly as it had appeared, and most of the children escaped with a spraying of brine. I say most. Three, sad to tell, were carried away by the wave as it fell back into the boiling sea. Two, a boy and girl, were never seen again. The other, a boy, was seen to be struggling in the

water at the base of the cliff, and was with great difficulty rescued.

The picnic was at an end, and how the kind master and the scholars wept as they returned that day to Dunmore!

Among the sorrowing children was a slender, sunny-faced girl named Myrtie Moseley. She wept with the rest as she thought of the loss of the bodies of her playmates. But she thought of something more. Though only a little past twelve, she was a serious child, and thought of the *souls* of her drowned companions. "Where would *my* soul be now, had *I* been taken?" she kept asking herself. And as she lay in her bed that night, she trembled as she thought on those solemn words of Jesus, "Fear Him, who after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him" (Luke xii. 5).

CHAPTER II.

Winter Visitors.

"DE mail come, Miss Ellen."

The speaker was a stout, good-natured looking colored girl who gloried in the high-sounding name of Euphrasia Victoria, though nearly everybody called her Phrasia, for short. She had been brought up from a child by the Moseleys, and at the date of our story was still living with them as a servant. The person whom she addressed as Miss Ellen was not really a *Miss* at all but Mrs. Moseley, Myrtie's mother. It is customary in the Bahamas to continue calling women by their maiden-names after their marriage. Even grandmothers

are, curiously enough, spoken of as "Miss Marion," "Miss Janey," etc.

The day on which our chapter opens was the usual day for the arrival of the bi-weekly mail from Nassau, the capital and chief port of the colony. Steamers from New York bring the mails to this island-metropolis, from whence small schooners, subsidized by the government for the purpose, take them to the "Out Islands," as the surrounding islands are called. Having a mail but once a fortnight, the arrival of the mail-schooner is an event of some importance at the various settlements at which they touch.

"Has she brought many passengers, do you know, Phrasia?" asked Mrs. Moseley, in answer to the announcement of the mail's arrival.

"Yes'm. I seed de school-masta, Mars Roberts, Mars Sands, Miss Lois, an' a

lady an' gemmen come from 'Merica, I hear de cap'n say."

"Yes? Winter visitors, I suppose. I wonder where they will stay. Do you know who took them?"

"Nobody has taken us, madam, but Capt. Russell directed us to you. We were not aware on leaving Nassau that there were no regular hotels or boarding houses on the Out Islands, and if you can give myself and wife a room or two in this fine, large house of yours we shall be very much obliged to you indeed."

Mrs. Moseley turned abruptly at this unexpected answer to her question and found herself face to face with a young, refined looking, well-dressed gentleman and lady. Behind them stood a troop of grinning colored boys and men with trunks, valises, boxes, and other bag-

gage in their hands, or balanced on their heads. These answer the purpose of expressmen in the Out Islands where horses and wagons are unknown.

Mrs. Moseley considered a few moments before consenting to board the strangers. Her husband, Capt. Moseley, was away on a voyage to Savannah with a cargo of oranges, and she did not know whether he would care to have his comfortable home turned into a boarding house. She told them of this, but finally said, "I will take you until my husband's return, when, if he is not satisfied you can easily find another place."

The strangers thanked her warmly and gave their names as Mr. and Mrs. Grant of Oswego, N. Y. Two large, airy rooms on the second floor were put at their disposal and when the baggage was

all brought up, Mr. Grant prepared to pay off the men and boys. Turning to the two bare-foot, coatless men who had brought the trunks from the wharf, he said, "Well, how much do I owe you each?" "Sixpence, sah," was the reply. "How much is that?" asked Mr. Grant, who was not used to English pounds and pence. "Da' sixpence, sah." "Do you mean twelve cents?" "Yes'r."

"Now Elijah," broke in a girlish voice, "you know you do not mean twelve cents at all. Six cents is all you ever get for carrying a trunk, and, Mr. Grant, don't you pay them any more than six cents each, and the boys two cents. That is quite enough."

Myrtie Moseley was the speaker. She had heard the conversation from the hall-way and as Mr. and Mrs. Grant were now guests of the family, she felt it

her duty to interpose. Elijah and his companion Jacob did not seem at all offended or ashamed, but took each their three-pence sterling with a bow and a "Tank e sah," and silently retired. The boys received each their English penny with a broad grin and rushed to the street to invest it in sugar-cane, cocoanut-cake, or some other kind of sweet for which their stomachs were at that time craving.

When they were gone Myrtie explained to the Americans the confusion existing in the colony relative to the English and United States money in use. "Having so much intercourse with the United States," she said, "we have a good deal of their gold and bills in circulation among us. We have no coinage of our own, but use the English money. This is mostly the ha' penny, worth one cent

American money; the penny, two cents; the silver threepence, (pronounced here, threppence,) which is six cents; sixpence, twelve cents; the shilling piece, worth twenty-four cents; and the two shilling piece, which is forty-eight cents. But most of the colored people, of whom about ninety per cent of the population of our colony is composed, scarcely ever say penny, or half-penny. For ha-penny, they say *small* copper, and a penny, *big* copper. Sixpence is always six cents, and a shilling is twelve cents. A shilling is called a 'quarter,' and two shillings fifty cents. The more intelligent people always say 'shilling *currency*,' when they mean twelve cents, and 'shilling *sterling*,' when they mean twenty-four cents. Four shillings sterling is called a 'short' dollar. An American dollar bill is called a 'long' dollar and a five dolla$_r$

gold piece, five long dollars. Five *short* dollars would be one pound sterling or 480 cents. It is very confusing to strangers and how it came to be in such a muddle I can hardly understand."

"Thank you," said Mr. Grant, in reply to Myrtie's clever explanation, "I am sure what you have told us will be of much use to us in the future. But I feel sorry to think that Elijah, who has such a good Scripture name, should be so ready to take advantage of our ignorance."

"Oh, that is quite common with him," said Myrtie. "It seems impossible for some of them to keep from telling stories and pilfering. They are good-natured and easy to get along with but very few of them can be trusted."

"No, nor anybody, but for the grace of God," said Mr. Grant. Here the con-

versation was interrupted by the entrance of Euphrasia with water and towels for the visitors, and Myrtie retired. But Mr. Grant's last words struck her forcibly. She could not help thinking of them as she went to her music lesson and she was pleased to think that the strangers were probably true Christians, who might, under God, be a means of blessing to her soul. Eight months had passed since the terrible tragedy at the Glass Window and the solemn impression made upon Myrtie Moseley's mind had not yet worn away. Her convictions deepened, rather, as time went by, and at the time of Mr. and Mrs. Grant's arrival at Dunmore she was more anxious concerning her soul's salvation than she had ever been before. Myrtie, as yet, knew not that peace He gives, who said, "Come unto Me, all ye that

labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

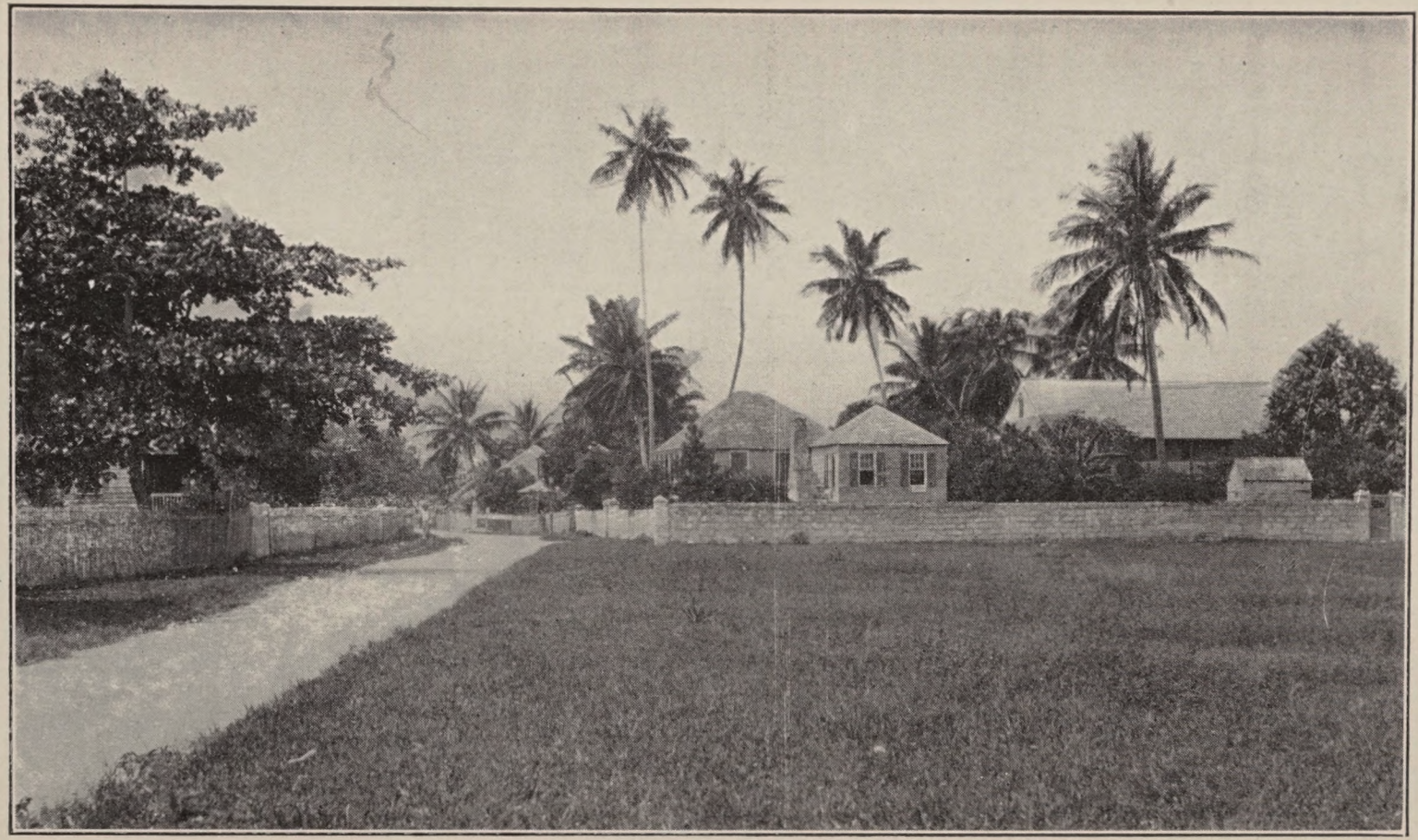
But "God is light," and conviction must ever precede conversion.

CHAPTER III.

Greycliffe.

MYRTIE Moseley's home, at which the visitors found themselves so comfortably established, was a typical better-class Bahamian residence. It was a large, square, two-story structure built of native, coral limestone. The friable nature of this stone makes it necessary to plaster over its outside face with a coating of cement, which is in turn usually given a coating of a kind of tinted kalsomine. The tints are usually very faint and of various shades, sometimes blue, sometimes yellow, and often pink. The Moseley's house was of a delicate gray stain, hence its pretty name,

"Greycliffe." Broad verandahs ran along three of its sides, both up and down stairs. It faced the sea on its eastern side, and the view of the curving sandy beach, the white breakers foaming and frothing over the coral reef, and the broad blue ocean beyond, was most charming. The numerous large windows were provided with close, stout, wooden shutters, painted a deep green. These shutters are a necessity throughout all the West Indian islands, owing to the hurricanes which frequently rise and rage about those latitudes. Behind the house stood a small, disconnected building used as a cook-house. The cooking was not done on a stove as in the North, but over an open fire burning on a kind of stone platform, something like a blacksmith's forge. The baking was done in a dome-shaped oven, stand-



BETTER CLASS BAHAMIAN RESIDENCES.

ing by itself near by, resembling very much the old-fashioned bee-hives, seen now only in pictures. Beautiful red, white, and yellow roses covered nearly the whole rearside of the house, where there was no verandah. Roses bloom the year round in the Bahamas, (the month of May excepted) and this western wall of Greycliffe was nearly always radiant with buds and blossoms. Surrounding the house was a spacious garden (called a "yard" here) in which grew cocoanut palms, poncianas, southern cedars, and almond-trees, besides oranges, lemons, limes, guavas, and various other tropical and sub-tropical fruits. Around the whole, on three sides, ran a high stone wall, tinted a faint yellow. A low limestone cliff bounded the garden on its sea side, making a wall there unnecessary.

The gate, hung on two large pillars of masonry, was made of massive mahogany, two-leaved, and very high, the top shaped very much like an inverted Gothic arch. "GREYCLIFFE" was painted in black on the right-hand pillar. At the front door of the house, on a tiny shelf, stood a little tea-bell, which answers here, as everywhere throughout the islands, as a door-bell. Inside the house the rooms were all large and airy, and the appointments in every way suited to a country enjoying the year round a semi-tropical climate.

Mr. and Mrs. Grant were delighted with everything they saw. Myrtie tried to explain everything to them the first morning of their stay. Though quiet, she was not a shy girl, and she and her mother's guests were soon like old familiar friends. Mrs. Grant told her that

they had come to the Bahamas for her health, as she could not stand the severe, chilling winds that blew over the lake during the winter at their home in Oswego. Her husband was a mill owner, but had left the management of his business to a competent superintendent, so as to accompany his wife.

They breakfasted at nine and dined at three. Myrtie's school (a private one kept by the Wesleyan minister's wife) commenced like the board, or public school, at ten, and let out at two, which is quite long enough anywhere within the tropics. She explained to Mr. Grant, how, owing to the mixture of white and colored in the board-schools, all who could afford it sent their children, especially daughters, to the separate private schools. They, like the board-schools, had only a month's summer

vacation, she said, which was in August.

After dinner, as it grew cooler, Mr. Grant proposed a walk about the town, to "have a look," as he said. Myrtie offered to act as guide to them, and together they started out. Myrtie noticed Mr. Grant's pockets stuffed out with papers of some kind, and was wondering at it, when they stopped at a little building, not much bigger than a large dry-goods box, in which an old colored woman "kept shop." Here Mr. Grant purchased a few sappodillas, and handed the old woman one of his papers, saying, "Wont you have a tract telling of the Lord Jesus and His death for sinners?" At once old Francena (for such was her name) clasped her hands as if in adoration, and rolling her large dark eyes towards heaven, said fervently, "Bress de Lawd, yes, marsa."

"Are you saved?" asked Mr. Grant.

"I's fightin' ha'd, sah."

"Oh, but that is not the way. Scripture says it is 'not of works lest any man should boast.'"

"Yes, marsa, I reads de Bible; I prays, I'ten's chapel; I dream one night I see'd de ——"

"Never mind what you have done or dreamed," interrupted Mr. Grant, who saw that Francena was getting excited, making energetic gestures and ready to say a half dozen words to his one. "What *Christ* has done is what saves us. Read this little paper carefully, and some day I will come round and give you another."

"Yes, marsa."

They left her slowly spelling off aloud the title of the tract, "WHAT DID JESUS COME TO DO?"

As they passed down the street, Mr. Grant thought they could not have attracted more attention had they been Barnum's circus processsion. They were viewed from doors, windows, gateways, over walls, and where not. Old men ducked their heads courteously as they met the "white folks," and grabbed their hats or caps off their woolly heads. The younger ones were less polite. Whispered remarks and questions were heard on every hand, and requests for "coppers" not infrequent.

"You must not give too freely, Mr. Grant," cautioned Myrtie, "few of them are in real need, and if it becomes known that you give coppers on the street, you will have no peace whenever you go out. They seem to think that every American visitor is a millionaire, who comes to the Bahamas purposely to give away

coppers. If you wish to help the really needy ones, I will take you any time to their houses. That will be the better way."

"Thank you," said Mr. Grant. "I see already that your advice is good. Can you read, my man?"

"Yaas sah, some tingy (tiny) bit, sah."

"Very well, here is a little paper telling how to be saved for nothing."

"Tank e, sah. You minista, sah?"

"Oh no, but I am saved. How is it with you?"

"Oh, I all right, sah. I locust preacher" (local preacher).

"Yes? But that will not give you any title to heaven."

"I tryin' ha'd sah. De Bible say de Lawd help dem wot help demselbes. I been memba mos' forty yea', sah."

"It is not trying, but *trusting*, that

saves. And the Bible does not say, 'The Lord helps those who help themselves.'"

"De Bible no say dat? Wha' de Bible say den?"

"The Bible says, 'But to him that worketh *not*, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

Quite a crowd had collected by this time. The "locust" preacher evidently did not care to display his ignorance to Mr. Grant in the presence of his fellow-townsmen, so all listened attentively, while Mr. Grant told them in simple words of God's only way of salvation through Christ. There were frequent nods and exclamations of approval, and as our three friends resumed their walk some of the crowd followed them, hoping to hear more "religion talk" from

the stranger. What seemed to amaze them most was that he should not be a "minista." That a man *not a minister* should be able to talk and quote Scripture as he did seemed almost a miracle to them.

The visitors and their young guide returned to Greycliffe just as the great red sun was setting in the western sea. After an eight-o'clock tea, they sat on the veranda until ten, when after prayers, led by Mr. Grant, they retired to rest.

So ended the Grants' first day at Greycliffe.

CHAPTER IV.

The Preaching in the Shipyard.

"WHERE, about town, would be a good place to have an open-air meeting this coming Lord's Day, Mrs. Moseley?" asked Mr. Grant a few days after the events of our last chapter.

"Well, I don't know," answered Mrs. Moseley: "why don't you ask for one of the chapels?"

"Because, among other reasons, I wish to reach as many as possible. There are three denominations here, I learn, and if I preach in any one of their buildings, the others would not likely attend. So I think it will be best to have the meet-

ing somewhere in the open-air, where all may feel free to come and hear."

"Well, let me see now," said Mrs. Moseley, thoughtfully.

"I know Mama," broke in Myrtie, who had been listening to the conversation, "the shipyard up yonder will be just the place. Don't you remember, I pointed it out to you in our walk the other day, Mr. Grant? There is a fine large fig-tree there for shade. I think it will be just the place."

"I recollect it; you told me it was a general lounging place for the white men of the town. But why do you call it *up* yonder? I should call it *down*. Is it not at the southern end of the town?"

"Yes, but that is one of our curious customs here in the Bahamas. All the Americans speak of it. East and south are always 'up' with us. We always

say 'up east,' never 'down east,' as you do in the States. Points to the north of us, within the colony, are always spoken of as 'down.'"

"It does sound a little strange," replied Mr. Grant, "but up or down, I think, as you say, the shipyard will be a suitable place. Now what hour in the afternoon will be most suitable or convenient?"

"I think about four o'clock," said Mrs. Moseley.

So it was arranged to have a meeting "up yonder" in the shipyard on Lord's Day, at four in the afternoon. It soon became generally known over Dunmore, and at the appointed hour a large crowd had collected at the spot. Many who lived close by brought chairs. Some made seats of soap and biscuit boxes, borrowed from a shop-keeper in the

THE SHIPYARD.

neighborhood. Others seated themselves in a row on the prostrate trunk of a cocoanut-tree blown down during the last hurricane. Another long row established themselves on an old spar. A good many of the men, black and white, reclined on the grass beneath the fig-tree, while a few ensconced themselves in the boats drawn up on the beach. A good proportion of the company stood, some close to the preacher's selected stand, and others, more shy or less interested, "afar off." Myrtie was there with a number of her girl friends. As they were singing the opening hymns Mr. Grant noticed Elijah and Jacob in the crowd. Old Francena was also present with a big family Bible in her hands. The "locust" preacher too was there, only he took good care to keep about the margin of the crowd, as if he feared

getting within too close range of the speaker. He noticed a few peeping over walls or around corners. These were the Nicodemus hearers, who feared or felt ashamed to be found listening to a preacher not of their own denomination.

Nearly all present joined in the singing. Mr. Grant took care to use only old familiar tunes, though the words of the hymns were new to most. Colored men, who could not read a word, hardly, took hymn-sheets, and it was amusing to hear them rolling out a deep bass or shrill tenor to no other words (if words they can be called) than, "ah ah, ah ah, ah ah, ah ah." Words are of insignificant importance to most of them, but of music they are passionately fond.

The singing over, Mr. Grant, after a brief prayer, took his stand on a cast

off hatch and announced his text—Job xxxvi. 18, "Because there is wrath, beware, lest He take thee away with His stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee." He had selected his text in view of a sad accident that had recently occurred between Dunmore and a neighboring settlement. A man and his wife had been visiting at Dunmore, and, contrary to the advice of their friends, started for home in a small, open boat. They had to pass a dangerous point on their way, and a heavy sea (called here a "rage") was on. A great wave filled the boat with water and it immediately sank. The man succeeded in saving himself, but his poor wife was never afterwards seen. The boat's mast was found a few days later and, entangled in its pulley blocks, was a portion of the drowned woman's hair. This sad oc-

currence had cast a solemn gloom over the inhabitants of Dunmore and Mr. Grant thought it well to take advantage of the then thoughtful state of the community.

He said, in beginning, "We have three things in our text I wish to notice; the *actual*, the *probable*, and the *impossible*. The actual, 'There *is* wrath;' the probable, '*lest* He take thee away with His stroke;' the impossible, 'then a great ransom *cannot* deliver thee.'" He proved, first of all, from Scripture, that God, being holy in His nature, must hate sin. He showed from John iii. 36, that the "wrath of God," was ever hanging over the unbeliever's sinful head, like a big, black thunder-cloud, and ready at any moment to burst and deluge him in destruction. He quoted Rom. i. 18, to show that the "wrath of God" was "re-

vealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;" and from Rom. ix. 22, he proved that though the wicked sometimes appeared to live and prosper, it is with "much long-suffering" that God *endures* these "vessels of wrath, fitted (by their sins) to destruction."

In taking up his second point, the probable, he dwelt at some length on the uncertainty of life. To illustrate this, he related several incidents. "I once met a gentleman," said he, "who had fought in the late American Civil War, on the Confederate side. He told me how after they had once fought fiercely for three successive days, without either side gaining any decided advantage, a truce was agreed upon. It was Sunday morning and both forces

were nearly worn out, so it was mutually agreed upon to rest on that day, and recommence hostilities the following morning. My informant retired with some of his comrades to a spring, about half a mile back from the firing line. After a drink around they washed their smoke begrimmed faces. One of the company then took out a pocket comb and mirror and commenced combing his hair. To see the better to part it, he inclined his head to one side, and almost instantly there was a loud report, and a piece of a shell cut open the exposed portion of the young soldier's throat. He died in a few moments, his life's blood dying crimson the recently crystal waters of the spring.

"How secure he thought himself," said Mr. Grant, "after fighting three days, unscathed, in the thick of the battle.

But we never know when our time is coming, and there, half a mile back from the firing line, when the enemy were supposed to be at least a mile away, by a shell exploded accidently, perhaps, God's stroke took him away. I have heard of an old soldier, who had passed unhurt through many campaigns, dying at last by blood-poisoning, brought on by the tiny prick of a pin. An old sea-captain, too, who had retired after having weathered many a hurricane, was found one day drowned in his bath tub!" He told too how, when in Nassau, a friend had told him of a young woman, who attended service one evening among the "windward islands" where he had been laboring, and on her way home dropped dead in her tracks, taken suddenly "away" by God's "stroke." "Beware," he said, looking solemnly in the direction

of Myrtie, "lest He take *thee* away with His stroke."

She trembled as he spoke, and turned pale with suppressed emotion. The Spirit of God was certainly working in her soul, and as Mr. Grant went on her agitation increased. He spoke of the "impossible,"—impossibility of repentance or salvation after death, citing a number of Scripture texts in proof. He dwelt with much feeling on the "ransom," even Jesus, "who gave Himself a ransom for all." At the close he gave out the hymn, "Where wilt thou spend Eternity?" and after the singing and a few words of prayer, he "dismissed the assembly."

As he passed through the crowd, shaking hands, and giving out tracts, he heard loud sobbing. It was Myrtie. She was giving way to the pent-up feel-

ings of her bursting heart, and seemed oblivious of the awestruck, gaping crowd about her. A few rude white boys were making sport of her tears, but she did not heed them. Mrs. Grant hurried off to Greycliffe with her, and as soon as Mr. Grant arrived, he took her by him on the sofa, and Bible in hand sought to lead her thoughts from herself and her sins to Christ and His cross. He explained to her what a ransom meant. "Some Mohammedan brigands once," he said, "took captive a lady missionary and then demanded a great sum of money for her ransom. I think it was $50,000. Her friends paid the sum of money and she was set at liberty. And," he added, "we were held captive by stern justice. We were completely in the power of Satan, but the Lord Jesus by His death at Calvary paid the ransom.

He gave Himself and now all who believe are free,'justified from all things.'" Light soon broke in upon her soul. She then and there received Christ as her Saviour, and together the little company fell upon their knees, while Mr. Grant thanked God for this, the first soul given him in the Bahama Islands.

Others were deeply affected by the preaching. Many said it was the most solemn address they had ever listened to, and hoped soon to hear more.

Truly "the word of God is quick and powerful" (Heb. iv. 12).

CHAPTER V.

Trials and Triumphs.

MYRTIE'S conversion was evidently real. One proof of this was that she now loved to read the Bible, something she had never done before. A new-born babe almost immediately wants milk, and the apostle Peter writing to believers says, "As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby." Myrtie, the new-born babe in Christ, felt this desire, and Mrs. Grant helped her very much in the undertanding of certain passages.

Another evidence of the reality of her conversion was that she no longer cared

for worldly dress or company. Her kind mother allowed her to modify her dress to what Myrtie thought was consistent with her profession. In this also Mrs. Grant was of great help to her, in deciding what to retain and what to lay aside. But her aunt Cecelia, who was a very worldly woman, tried hard to persuade her to continue wearing her former finery, and it was a real trial to Myrtie to be compelled to resist her, for she loved her aunt and did not wish to displease her. But she loved and feared God more, and stood firm in her resolu tion to dress simply, according to the Word of God (See 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10; 1 Pet. iii. 3–6).

At the time of her conversion she was preparing to take part in a worldly church entertainment. She told the promoter that she could not any longer go

on with the practice, but was only laughed at and called silly. But she was fully prepared to be laughed at and called a fool for Christ's sake, and they soon found out she meant every word she said. Her conversion was the talk of the town. All sorts of opinions were expressed, and various predictions made. Some said it was all excitement. Others said Myrtie was always inclined to be "good," while others still said it would soon all pass away and she would be herself again.

Her uncles tried to tease her in a good-natured way, but she always had a ready answer for them. It seemed incredible to them that a child of her age (she was just thirteen) should be such a decided Christian. One of them asked Mr. Grant what he thought about her, if he believed she really understood

what she professed. "I see no reason to doubt it," he replied. "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God ordains praise, Scripture says. The child Samuel was probably converted at a much earlier age than she. Wait and see. If she is really 'born again' she will, no doubt, continue."

Mrs. Grant gave her a beautiful book called "Frances Grey's Decision," which encouraged her very much. She soon read it for herself and then started it circulating among her school-mates. One of these, named Elaine Moss, became much interested. After hearing Mr. Grant preach the second Sunday in the shipyard from the three scriptures, "Let *us* alone," "Let *it* alone," and "Let *him* alone" she went home burdened with a sense of her sin. She saw she had been all her life saying to the

Lord Jesus, "Let us alone," and like the barren fig-tree, useless to God and only a cumberer of His earth. And when stern Justice said "Cut it down," His mercy had said pleadingly, "Let it alone this year also, till I dung it and dig about it. If it bear fruit, well, and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down." And she feared that if she continued in her sins and worldly ways much longer resisting the strivings of God's Spirit, He might say some day, "LET HER ALONE." She knew that she must then die without hope.

That night she could not sleep. She rolled and tossed restlessly upon her bed. Her mother, hearing her sobs, came to her and tried to comfort her, but as she was herself unconverted, or, if a Christian, a very careless one, she could not help her. At last, morning came, but

with its light no spiritual light came to poor Elaine's convicted soul. She could eat no breakfast, and school was out of the question. She wanted eternal life, like Bunyan's Pilgrim fleeing from the City of Destruction, and could set her mind on nothing else. Her distress alarmed her mother, and about midday she left the house to ask Mrs. Grant to come and speak with her daughter.

When she had left the house, Elaine picked up a New Testament, hoping to find something in it to give her comfort. And comfort she found, and much more besides. She happened to read from the first epistle of Peter, second chapter. As she read ver. 24, light and peace came in an instant. "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye

were healed," was the wonderful message to her soul. She saw it all. Christ had died for her, bearing all her sins on Calvary, and by His stripes, endured for her sake, she was healed, saved, sanctified—"dead to sins."

When her mother returned she saw at once the change in Elaine's face. Mrs. Grant came later, but she was not needed, only to praise with Elaine the grace of God and the love of Christ, displayed in her conversion.

Myrtie's former companion in nature now became her intimate companion in Christ, and a very warm attachment sprang up between them. They shared each others joys and trials, and were the wonder of the place. Mr Grant gave them several packets of tracts, and together they went to the colored people's houses to distribute them and sing to

them some of the new hymns they had learned at Mr. Grant's meetings.

Richard, the colored boy who helped Mrs. Moseley about the house, also professed to be converted, and used all his money to buy a Bible. Christians, too, were helped and quickened in their souls.

CHAPTER VI.

Margaret and her Dream.

"YOU have not yet taken us to the houses of the really poor or destitute as you promised us, Miss Myrtie," said Mr. Grant one day, after they had been nearly three weeks at Dunmore.

"I am ready at any time," replied Myrtie pleasantly. "I can go this afternoon if it suits you and Mrs. Grant."

"It will suit us exactly. It is not very warm to-day and we can start immediately after dinner," said Mr. Grant. So after dinner the trio started out on their mission of mercy. As they walked down the narrow, winding street, over the clean, white, coral limestone pavement,

Mr. Grant said to Myrtie, "Whose house will you guide us to this afternoon?"

"I have a number of places in mind," said Myrtie.

"I should like to visit someone who is the Lord's," he said. "Scripture says we are to do good unto all men, but specially unto them who are of the household of faith. So take us to some Christian. They have the first claim upon us."

"Very well," answered Myrtie, "I will take you to see Margaret the leper. She is, I believe, a true Christian, though very ignorant. We will not go in, but can stand and talk with her at the door. She will be glad to see us I know."

They were soon at Margaret's gate. She lived in a poor little hut, with a dilapidated thatched roof. She was not old, though elderly, and her black shin-

"She lived in a poor little hut." *p. 56*

ing face had a pleasant expression. She was greeted by Myrtie pleasantly, who said, "I have brought some friends to see you, Margaret. They are Americans, but love the Lord Jesus Christ, and will talk to you a little."

Margaret, on hearing this, dropped one of those funny curtesies, so peculiar to the old West Indian negroes. Their bodies remain rigid, neither do they bow their heads, but seem to suddenly bend their knees and "duck," just as a person with a stiff neck would do on entering a doorway for which he was much too tall. It reminds one of a bare-foot boy suddenly stepping on a tack or sharp stone.

Like all the older and well-trained colored people, Margaret waited to be spoken to first by the strangers. So, after the ordinary salutations, Mr. Grant

said, "Do you know Jesus, Margaret?"

She clasped her hands so suddenly as almost to *clap* them, and closing her eyes, said reverently, "Yes, Marsa, He is my own blessed Jesus!"

"How long have you known Him as your Saviour?"

"Oh, long time, long, long; I girl when Jesus fine me."

"Don't you get weary being shut up in your house all alone?"

"No, Marsa; Jesus, He wid me all day an' all night."

"Can you read?"

"No Marsa, neba laant t' read."

"Then you must find it hard, not being able to read God's word."

"But Jesus talk wid me. I sits here all alone and feels Him close, close. One night I dream Jesus come to my bed. He ha' two bright crown in Him han'.

He say,' Here Margaret, here two crown fo' you.' "

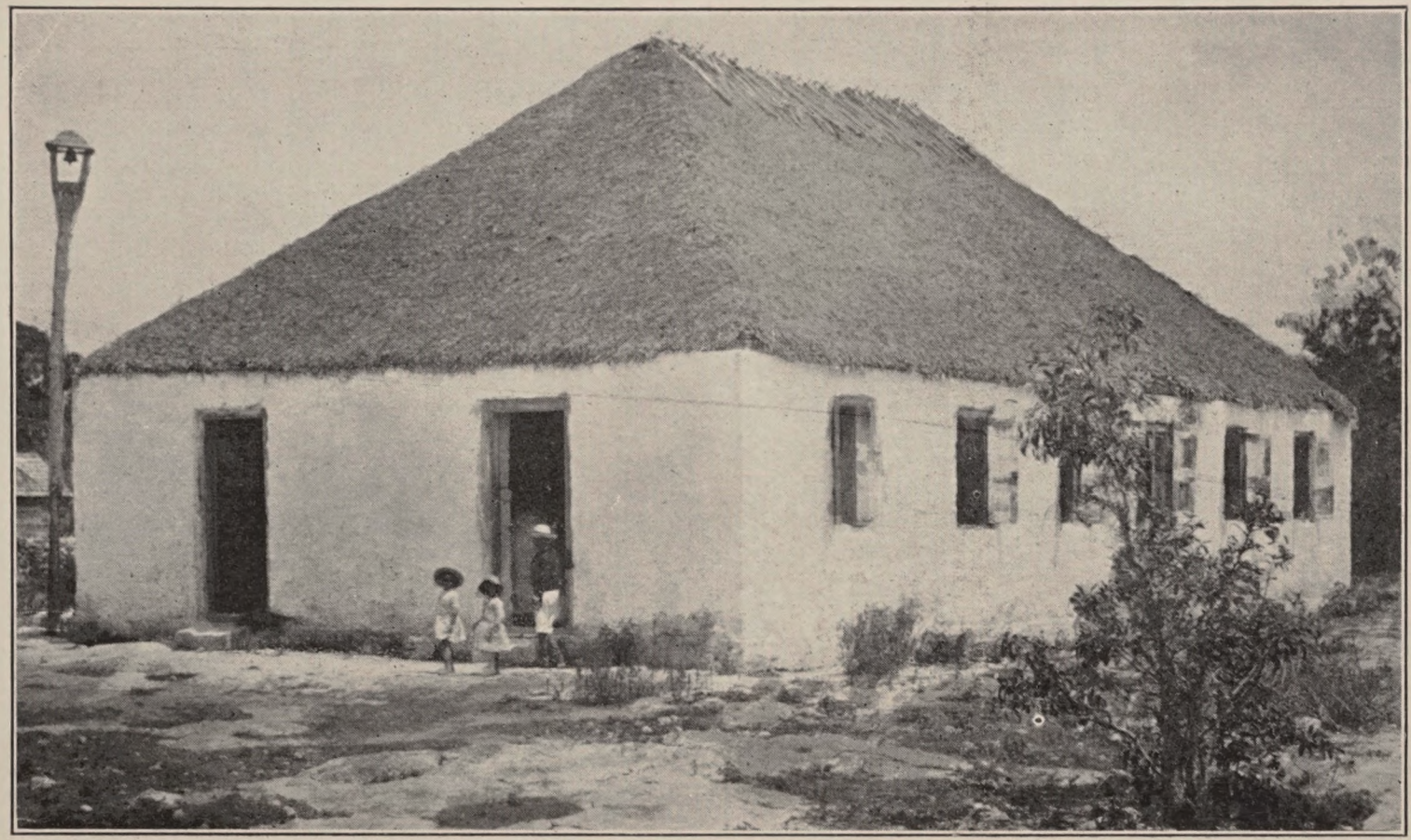
"And did you take them?"

"Yes, Marsa."

"What did you do with them?"

"I put one by, an' wored oder one. By 'm by de crown I wear turn brack, brack. I look at oder crown; him no shine eider. Oh I feel bad. Den Jesus, Him come 'gen. He say, 'What matter, Margaret?' I say,' Lawd, de two crown no more shine.' He say, 'Neber min' chile. By 'm by I come 'gen an' gib yo' crown wot always stay shiney bright.' An' oh, I feel so happy den, my heart almost *bust!*" Here she seemed almost overcome with emotion, and Mr. Grant had to wait some time before she ceased wringing her hands, rolling her tear-filled eyes, and swinging her head from side to side. At last he said,

"Well Margaret, you dreamed of three crowns, and Scripture also speaks of three, the 'crown of life,' the 'crown of righteousness,' and the 'crown of glory which fadeth not away.' That is the one the Saviour must have meant when He told you of the one that would never tarnish or grow dim." He spoke at some length of these three crowns, and then they left, as they were tired standing, and dared not sit down anywhere within the leprous yard. The Grants noticed that the ends of her fingers were gone, though her face was not disfigured. They made several other calls on their way home. They usually found the colored women poking about their smoking fires in their "yard" or stretched full length on the floor of their houses, often puffing away at an old black pipe. All said, "How de," courteously, and



AN ISLAND CHAPEL (*colored*). P. 60.

some of the less informed were heard to ask over stone walls, "Ho da? wa dey do?" (who is that? what do they do?) concerning the retreating visitors. All seemed glad to get tracts and commenced to read them aloud to themselves almost immediately. They were frequently followed by men, women and children, asking for "tracks."

They called on one old man who appeared to be a real believer in the Lord Jesus. He told Mr. Grant he was "elda in de Baptis" (Baptist elder). He could not read, and made a statement which even Mr. Grant could not help smiling at. He said, "De Bible, I hea' tell, say de earf resolve roun' on him axle-trees." After they had left him, Myrtie told of a white man she knew, who was both able to read and in fairly good circumstances, who when told that the

sun was hundreds of times larger than the moon, replied, "I don't believe it. I have eyes to see for myself, and no man can tell me that the sun is bigger than the moon."

On reaching Greycliffe, Richard was despatched to the nearest "shop" to purchase, at Mr. Grant's expense, flour, pork, tea and other necessaries to be carried to Margaret. Myrtie added a few delicacies, paid for out of her own purse, and they all enjoyed the better their own evening repast of toast, tea, and native fruits, in knowing that Margaret's wants were, for the present, abundantly supplied.

CHAPTER VII.

A Visit to the Board-school.

THE days passed pleasantly at Greycliffe, both to Myrtie with her new-found joy in Christ, and the Grants, who enjoyed the mild, equable climate immensely.

One morning, early in February, Mr. Grant expressed a desire to visit the public school. He invited Mrs. Moseley to accompany him and his wife, which she readily consented to do. Myrtie, on hearing this, asked if she might also go. Mrs. Moseley said she might, so about noon the party set out. The school-house was a small-sized, oblong stone structure of only one story, set off by

itself on an eminence, a short distance out of town. It had no play-ground around it, only rough rocks and bushes. The windows had no sash, and, to admit the daylight, the usual close wooden shutters were thrown wide open, giving thus plenty of ventilation. The sounds coming from these open windows, as they approached, was a perfect babel. Just outside the door were dozens of nondescript native straw hats lying about, in all stages of decadence. A few had been weighted down with stones by their more thoughtful owners. The remainder of the children's hats they found inside, stacked up in one corner of the school-room. Mr. Wood, the master of the school, gave his visitors a hearty welcome. He was a thin, worried, weary-looking man; and no wonder: for here, in a single room, not more than 25 x 35,

were packed a dense mass of children, possibly one hundred or more. On the master's desk was a large conch-shell, which served as a horn, (the school had no bell) besides two or three rattans, which gave evidence that some one thought it is better for rattans as well as people "to *wear* out than to rust out." In one corner of the room stood a bucket of water out of which the scholars drank from an old rusty tomato can.

Myrtie was careful to take a seat by one of the windows, for in spite of the generous ventilation, the odor from this steaming mass of, shall we say, industry, was, to one unused to it, almost unbearable.

Excepting a few sickly-looking white boys, the school was wholly colored. The master told Mr. Grant, such is the

condition of the public schools in the Bahamas, that nearly one fourth of the children of the colony attend the private schools. Teaching, he said, was discouraging work. Few of the teachers were paid more than seventy-five pounds (about $350) a year, with sometimes a "teacher's residence" thrown in. The work, he said, was almost killing. The scholars attended very irregularly, and were sometimes sent to school without a mouthful of breakfast, so that it was almost impossible for them to study. A few of the larger scholars called "pupil-teachers" assisted him as monitors or in teaching the lower classes. Three or four classes were often on the floor at the same time and the uproar was almost deafening. He said the colored children usually kept up with the whites until they entered their teens, after

which it seemed impossible for the most of them to advance further. The seats were all about ten feet or more in length, and none of them had backs. Nearly all the children were barefoot and many of them were dressed in rags. After the visitors had heard the children sing, the master asked Mr. Grant if he cared to address a few questions or remarks to the school. Mr. Grant replied that he should, so standing up behind the master's desk, he drew his Bible from his pocket, and holding it up, asked, "What book is this, children?"

"The Bible, sir," cried a chorus of voices.

"Yes; and why do we call it the Bible? Do we find the word 'Bible' anywhere from Genesis to Revelation?"

Some answered, "No," and others "Yes."

"No' is right," said Mr. Grant. "It is not called 'Bible' anywhere excepting on the title page, which is not, of course, inspired. But what is it called in the Bible itself?"

"The Scriptures, sir," said a little girl, timidly holding up her hand.

"That is right, my child. They are called 'the Scriptures' or the 'Holy Scriptures.' Scripture means writing, and these are the holy writings, because inspired of God. But they are called something else. Who can tell us?"

There was a pause, and much looking at one another, as if each expected to read the answer in the other's eyes. At last a good-sized boy cried suddenly, as if he feared someone might get ahead of him, "The word of God, sir."

"Correct," said Mr. Grant. "They are called 'the Holy Scriptures' and 'the

Word of God.' But then why do we call it the *Bible?*"

Of course nobody could tell, not even the master himself, we suppose. So Mr. Grant continued:—

"What is the meaning of the word Bible? None of you can tell, I suppose, so I must tell you myself. It is a word taken from the Greek language, and means a library. What is a library? now, who can tell?"

"A book, sir," said one.

"No, not quite. I know you speak here in the Bahamas of a book taken from the public or Sunday-school library as a 'library' but it is incorrect. Give another trial."

"A building, sir," said a faint voice.

"No, you are thinking of the library building. The building is not the library. Try again somebody."

"A book-case, sir," cried a boy, who spoke as if he was certain he had it right this time.

"Wrong again," said Mr. Grant. "A book case is only a place where books are kept. Somebody tell us now what a library is?"

No one venturing another guess, Mr. Grant said, "Well, I suppose I must tell you. A library is a collection of books. —What is it now?"

"A collection of books," shouted the whole school at once.

"Very well. The Bible is a collection of books. It was first called by this name in the fourth century by a servant of God named Chrysostom. Try and remember that name now. What was his name?"

"CHRYSOSTOM," roared a good part of the school. It was too difficult for the

little ones. Some of the larger scholars got it wofully twisted, pronouncing it "Chryshorstem," "Kososten," "Kisostin," and what not.

"Now, tell me, children, how many books are in this library? Your public library here has about 1000 books in it. The old Alexandrian library of Egypt, which was burnt forty-seven years before Christ, contained 700,000 volumes. But this sacred library in my hands, how many books does it contain?—Nobody seems to know. Well let us see. There are thirty-nine books in the old section of this library and twenty-seven in the new. How many is that, now?"

"Sixty-six," said a chorus of voices, though some were considerably behind the others. Someone said, "sixty-five," and another "seventy-six."

"It is a library of sixty-six books

then," continued Mr. Grant. "Now how long did it take to make this library? Let us figure that out. Who wrote the oldest—the first five books of this library? Someone says 'Moses.' This is right. That was how many years before Christ? Let your school-master tell us. Fifteen hundred years, about, he says, which is correct. Now how many years ago is it since Christ was born?"

"Eighteen hundred," some said. Others answered more correctly, "Nearly nineteen hundred, sir."

"Let us say about 2000 for even numbers. How old then are the first five books of this library? This big boy here says, 'Three thousand, five hundred,' which is correct. And these are by far the oldest books extant, or in existence, to-day. The newest of these books were

written by the apostles of the Lord, so God took 1500 years to make this library for us. Now, how many men, about, did God employ to write this library for us?—No one answers, and as it is rather a difficult question, I will answer it myself. He employed over thirty different men to write this library for us. Were they all well educated men? Some say 'yes,' and some say 'no.' 'No' is correct. All were not educated men. Some like David, who wrote most of the Psalms and was made to mind sheep in his boyhood, were not men of great learning. The prophet Amos was 'a herdsman' and 'a gatherer of sycamore fruit.' Others, like Moses, Solomon and Daniel, were brought up as princes, so of course, must have been highly educated. The writers of the New Testament, were also, some of them, like Paul

and Luke, men of education. Others, like Peter and James and John, who had been fishermen, were not well educated. It says in Acts iv. 13, that their judges 'perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men.' These books were all written on skins called parchments, and did not look like our books at all. They were in the form of rolls and were unrolled to be read—something like our patent shade rollers. He asked them a few more questions, and then, after a few words with Mr. Wood, left with the others.

It was a relief to get out into the pure, fresh air once more, and the walk home was enjoyed by all. They met a boy returning to the school, who had been sent out during their visit, to bring a bucket of water. He had it balanced on his head and seemed to have no more

trouble to keep it there than if it had been his cap. He saluted them gracefully as they passed and took care to give them all of the narrow pathway. They were a little tired on reaching Greycliffe (it does not take much exertion to weary one in the Bahamas) and were glad to rest themselves before dinner in the shade of the broad piazzas.

CHAPTER VIII.

Deadman's Cay.

CAPT. Moseley, on his return home, seemed satisfied to have the visitors at his house. Though not himself a Christian, he, like most of the better-class Bahamians, respected Christianity, and appeared pleased to learn of Myrtie's conversion.

One day, shortly after his return, he proposed spending a few days at his "fields" on Deadman's Cay, and invited the Grants to accompany him with his family. His guests readily acceded to this, and Myrtie asked if she might invite Elaine. Her father consented, and she immediately hurried off to tell Elaine

and ask her mother to allow her to go. Elaine's mother, after asking who was to make up the party, how long they were going to stay, etc., said she might go, and the two girls almost clapped their hands for joy.

Capt. Moseley ordered Richard to get the sail-boat ready, while Euphrasia Victoria packed up the clothes, bedding, dishes and provisions necessary for their proposed six days' stay at the Cay. They were to go on Monday,and return, "please God,"(as even the wickedest Bahamians say) on Saturday. Myrtie and Elaine were careful to bring their bathing suits, as there was a fine, hard, sandy beach on the north side of the Cay, where there was no danger from sharks.

Richard soon had everything safely in the boat, and about ten o'clock they hoisted sail and were off, leaving Grey-

cliffe in sole charge of Phrasia, and Rex, the faithful yard-dog.

On the way, Capt. Moseley explained to Mr. Grant how farming was carried on in the Bahamas. There being no wagon roads, he said, the people did not live scattered about, but in settlements along the shore, traveling from place to place in boats. The nature of the land is such that it can only be worked in patches, called "fields." These tillable tracts lie often miles away from the settlements, and, to save time, the farmers frequently build little huts on them, and live there with their families, sometimes months at a time. Capt. Moseley said he owned the whole of Deadman's Cay, which contained in all about fifty acres.

They were not long in making their ten-mile voyage, and about noon were

landed on the rocks, which at high tide formed a kind of natural wharf. Myrtie and Elaine rushed up the narrow pathway, through the bushes, to the house, and commenced to throw open the shutters and sweep the floor. It was a small one-story house with a palm-thatched roof. There were three small rooms down stairs, and a kind of garret, reached by a ladder, in which the two girls were to sleep.

Leaving his wife and Mrs. Grant, with Richard, to get things to rights at the house, Capt. Moseley started off with Mr. Grant and the girls to see the fruits and vegetables. They went first to a good-sized cocoa-nut grove where they picked up some large, green nuts. Capt. Moseley took a sheath-knife he had with him and cut off the ends of several, while the girls caught the "water" in tum-

blers as it gushed out. Mr. Grant tasted it, but did not like it at all.

"We 'conchs' are all very fond of it," said Myrtie laughingly, "though few Yankees seem to care for it. Perhaps you will like the 'jelly.'" So saying, she scooped out with a spoon the soft jelly-like white substance which in the matured cocoa-nut forms the hard, tough meat with which people in the North are familiar. Mr. Grant liked this better. "This is the way we nearly always eat cocoa-nuts," said Myrtie. As they were leaving the grove, Mr. Grant told the party of Mohammed once saying that his religion could only thrive where the palm-tree grew, meaning that it was only adapted to people living in a tropical climate. This he contrasted with the words of the Lord Jesus, who said to His disciples, "Go ye into *all* the

world and preach the gospel to *every* creature." His gospel is suited to all, because it meets the need of all; not only where the graceful palm throws out its waving fronds, but in the frozen north amongst Arctic lichens and reindeer-moss, in the temperate regions where the majestic oak-tree flourishes, and everywhere, wherever sinful man is found.

They passed patches of ripening tomatoes, (though it was early in February) watermelons, and sweet potatoes, until, at last, they reached the pine-apple bed. This interested Mr. Grant very much. Capt. Moseley explained to him how the slips were set out in the summer-time, and usually took nearly two whole years to bring forth a crop. Owing to the rocky nature of the soil, they were not planted in rows or drills, but scat-

tered broadcast, with scarcely space enough between to crowd through to weed in winter or gather the crop in May or June. The tiny, green pine-apples were growing at the end of a stalk shooting out of the midst of the spiked sword-shaped leaves, of which the leaves at the top of a matured "pine" (as the fruit is called here) is almost an exact representation, only on a much smaller scale. They found a few odd ripe ones (called "winter" pines) and returned with them to the house. The remainder of the day passed very pleasantly to all, and after Scripture-reading and prayer by Mr. Grant, they prepared to spend their first night on the lonely cay. Bedsteads, of course, were out of the question, so mattresses were spread on the bare floor. Myrtie and Elaine climbed laughingly into their

attic-chamber, while Richard went off to sleep under the decked portion of the boat.

The girls shook their bed-clothes out carefully, so as to discover any chance centipede or scorpion, as these dreaded creatures have a special liking for disused or damp buildings. After praying together, they talked themselves to sleep.

At sunrise the next morning they were up and away to the beach for a bath. The water was deliciously temperate, and as both were excellent swimmers, they passed a delightful hour diving and tumbling about in the surf. After breakfast they sat together in the hammock in the shade of two tamarind trees, and read their Bibles. Capt. Moseley took Richard to the fields with him to work, their only implements, (instruments or accoutrements rather) as with all Ba-

hamian farmers, being a sheath-knife and machete. The Grants went for a stroll along the beach, while Mrs. Moseley busied herself about the house. A white girl in the Bahamas is never supposed to do kitchen work until after her marriage, and then it is usually left entirely to colored servants. But Mrs. Moseley was a model housekeeper, and could turn her hand to almost anything about the house.

Towards sunset, Richard reported a steamer to the eastward of them, and they all went down to the shore to watch it disappear on the horizon. Mr. Grant took occasion to ask Capt. Moseley about a portion of an old hulk he had seen during his walk that morning. Capt. Moseley said it was the remains of a slaver, wrecked on the reef many years ago. A portion of the crew and

a few slaves only were saved. Several of these old Africans, he said, were still living at Dunmore. "One of them was the son of an African chief," said he, "and still goes about the street with a few rooster feathers stuck in his greasy cap to show his rank, though even people of his own color laugh at him."

"On our way home," he added, "I will show you where a Norwegian vessel called the 'Baltic' was driven on the beach and wrecked some years ago. She was soon buried in the quicksands, and the outline of her decks can still be seen beneath the water under certain favorable conditions."

So the time passed; days came and went, and when Saturday arrived the girls were almost sorry that they could not remain another week. Not so Richard. Working in the fields every day

under the sharp eye of Capt. Moseley was not at all to his liking, and he was only too glad when they hoisted sail and steered for Dunmore. He was not proving his faith by his works, and Mr. Grant was not at all satisfied as to the reality of his conversion.

On their way home they passed in close to where the buried "Baltic" lay, and, sure enough, there, like a dark shadow on the white sandy bottom, was the outline of the ill-fated vessel, with even the stumps of her masts well defined. It was a curious sight, Mr. Grant said, and well worth seeing.

They reached home without a mishap and found quite a crowd of friends to welcome them on the wharf. It seemed good to all to be back once more to dear old Greycliffe. "After all," said Myrtie, "there's no place like HOME!"

CHAPTER IX.

The Children's Meeting.

"MR. Grant," said Myrtie one afternoon at the dinner table, "why can't we have a children's meeting some day such as we read about in the papers and books you give us? Elaine and I and some of the other children have been talking about it, and I said I would ask you."

"I am willing, I am sure," replied Mr. Grant," if you think the children would like it. But where can we have it? The shipyard is too public for children and I know of no other place."

"Why, we can have it right here in our

yard, can't we Papa?" asked Myrtie, turning to her father.

"Yes, I suppose so, if your mother is willing."

Mrs. Moseley, as usual, was willing, so it was arranged to have it on Saturday afternoon at four o'clock. Lawn seats were collected from the neighboring yards, chairs were brought out of the house, and Richard rigged up a few extra seats out of boxes and boards. Saturday turned out to be a beautiful day, and about fifty girls and boys, mostly white, came together. The girls were dressed (as they are in the Bahamas the whole year round) in white, and they looked very pretty, ranged in rows under the mango and avacado pear-trees. Mr. Grant noticed, though, that scarcely any of the boys or girls had rosy cheeks. He remarked to Mrs. Grant that white

people are never at their best, physically, in a tropical climate, and that the cold and ice and snow she had fled from have their advantages, as well as their slight inconveniences.

There were no large boys present, though a few stood outside the gate to listen, or perhaps only to see. A poor leper boy had climbed into an almond-tree just outside the wall, to look and listen. Several came in carriages,—*baby* carriages,—and what good such little ladies and gentlemen could get from a meeting was difficult to say. But it was a *children's* meeting, and their colored nurses brought them with their older brothers and sisters.

After giving three of the older girls each a slip of paper, Mr. Grant gave out the opening hymn, just as Ezekiel (the big Barbadian policeman) struck the

hour of four on the jail-yard bell. He began the address by saying: "Children, I am going to talk to you a little about bees—Bible bees,—this afternoon. What do bees remind you of?"

There was no answer, so he continued: "I know you do not keep bees here in the 'out islands' as we do up north, but most of you have read something about bees in your school or other books. What do bees produce?"

"Honey," said a number of voices.

"That's right—honey," said Mr. Grant; "what else, now, do bees do, sometimes?"

"They stings, sir," said a bright eyed colored boy.

"Yes, they sting. Now what else do they do?"

No one seemed able to answer, so he asked again, "What else do bees do be-

sides making honey and stinging boys and girls who come too close to their hives or nests? What are they noted for?"

There was quite a long silence, when at last Amanda Wood, the schoolmaster's daughter, said, "Work?" in a questioning kind of tone, as if she were not quite certain.

"That's it," said Mr. Grant. "Bees are noted for their industry. You know the lines beginning:—

'How doth the little, busy bee
Improve each shining hour,
By gathering honey all the day,
From every opening flow'r.'

Now I am going to speak to you of three Scripture bees, a *stinging* bee, a *honey* bee, and a *working* bee. The stinging bee is mentioned in Numbers

xxxii. 23. Persis Sands will read the last clause of the verse for us. Read loud and distinctly so that all can hear, please."

A delicate looking girl about Myrtie's age stood up, and read from her Bible, "And *be* sure your sin will find you out."

"That is the stinging bee," said Mr. Grant. "The thought that all men's sins will some day be found out and exposed is meant to sting the conscience. It should make every unconverted boy and girl here tremble. You have all sinned and I hope this "bee" will sting you hard this afternoon. I know from experience how painful a bee-sting is. When I was a boy, about as big as Redith over there, I foolishly climbed up into one of my father's apple-trees, where some bees had made a nest, and

one of them stung me on the forehead. I cried with pain and lay on the floor nearly all the afternoon, with a mud plaster over the wound. And when we think of all our sins it is painful, especially when we think of our *secret* sins. Some day, children, all will be found out, though you may now hide them from your parents and teachers. I will tell you another story of my boyhood. Our large cellar was being floored with cement, and,contrary to my parents' commands, I went down the steps and tried to walk on the newly-laid cement. Down went my foot in the soft cement. I stepped quickly back and ran upstairs, thinking nobody would know who did it. But that night I was reprimanded for what I had done. How do you think they knew it was I who did it? Why they just measured the foot-print and so

my sin found me out. The damage was easily repaired, but I think I could find the mark on the cellar floor to this day."

After talking a little more about this "bee" he said, "We will now hear about a honey-bee of Scripture. Myrtie, read the text I gave you — Acts xvi. 31."

Myrtie rose to her feet and read her verse, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt *be* saved."

"We call that the honey-bee," said Mr. Grant, "because it yields such sweetness to those who have been stung by the 'bee' Persis read about. The Philippian jailer was stung by that 'bee' when he fell trembling before the apostles, crying, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' And the 'bee' they told him of was so sweet to his soul that he '*re-*

joiced,' it is said, 'believing in God with all his house.'"

Myrtie thought, as he spoke, of her own experience. "I know those two 'bees' well," she thought to herself. Elaine knew them too, and several others present. Myrtie thought Mr. Grant spoke beautifully of faith in Christ as the only means of being saved. That "be saved" was a very sweet one to her soul and she was almost sorry when he called for the third and last "bee." It was in 1 Cor. xv. 58. "*Be* ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." A Christian girl named Lilah Roberts read it.

"This is the 'bee' of industry," said Mr. Grant. "We are first convicted or stung by the first 'bee.' Then we believe on Christ as our Saviour, who died for all our sins and put them away forever,

so that God can say of all who believe, 'Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.' We know we have only to believe to 'be saved.' But when saved we have much to do, and those of you who know the second 'bee' by experience must not forget the last 'bee.' There is a little verse I like very much. It goes,

'I would not work, my soul to save,
For *that* my Lord hath done;
But I would work like any slave,
From love to God's dear Son.'"

He encouraged the Christians present to be "stedfast, unmovable." He told them of many ways in which they might work for the Lord, as in helping their parents, carrying things to the poor or sick, distributing tracts etc. They closed y singing the hymn,

"I am not told to labor,
To put away my sin."

All seemed to enjoy it very much and Myrtie learned afterwards that much good had been done by it. She herself had been benefitted most of all by it, she thought.

CHAPTER X.

Walks and Talks.

THE Grants were fond of walking, and as there were no country roads about Dunmore, they had to make choice between the white glarey streets, or the beach. They usually took the beach, where they could gather shells and bits of exquisite coral to take north as mementoes of their visit. Myrtie and Elaine sometimes accompanied them, and they would often sit in the shade of a sea-grape tree, or beneath an over-hanging rock, while Mr. Grant explained passages of Scripture which had puzzled them.

He never grew tired of admiring the

chameleon tints of the sea spread out before them. In some places (according to the depth, and nature of the bottom) it was of a most delicate pale green color, shading off gradually into a dark bottle green, ending in the foaming reef which stretched parallel with the shore, like a narrow snow-bank, for miles. Beyond rolled the "dark blue ocean," which in the far distance appeared to grow purple. A shimmering, circling line of light marked the horizon where sea and sky appeared to meet and merge. Patches of purple, brown, and bronze marked the position of sunken rocks, or sea-gardens of weed, sea-fans and sea-feathers. Myrtie told him that the beauty of the Bahamian seas excited the admiration of all visitors. Their matchless tints were due, Mr. Grant thought, chiefly to the white coralline

sand of the bottom and the transparency of the water.

Their strolls about the streets and lanes of Dunmore were equally interesting, though containing more of the dramatic, than the poetic element of their sea-side rambles. Mr. Grant usually carried his medicine case about with him when visiting the cots and cabins of the colored people (who appeared to be always ailing). Some of his "patients" puzzled him more than their diseases. "Pills" were always in great demand. Dialogues, something like the following, were of frequent occurence.

"Please gimme med'cine, Marsa Grant."

"What is the matter with you?"

"Oh, I feelin' bad, sah."

"How do you feel? have you fever?"

"No sah, I got a pain."

" Cots and cabins of the colored people." *p. 100.*

"Where?"

"Oh, all ova hea', sah," rubbing over the whole trunk from the shoulders to the hips and often to the knees. Of course, a diagnosis in such a case could be only guess-work, and the medicine as good as thrown away. They appeared to have a passion for pills, drugs, and "draffs," of any description, though the most abominable were generally believed by them to be the most efficacious.

One old grandfather said he was troubled with "indigestion of the *stomach*," (as if one could have indigestion anywhere else). Numbers told him that they had "enjoyed bad health" for years. One white man said he was suffering from "shortness of breath across his loins." "Here is a case for a specialist," thought Mr. Grant on hearing it. One poor man asked him what he

charged for the medicine just given him.

"A thousand pounds," said Mr.Grant, seriously.

His patient stared for a full minute in silent astonishment, and then said, "I aint got dat much money, boss, an' neva hopes to have it."

"Very well, then, you may have it for nothing. My terms are, for nothing, or one thousand pounds."

"Well, I habs t' take et fu' notin' den, boss, 'cos I aint got tousan' poun's."

"That's just like the law and the gospel. The Lord says to those who want to pay for salvation by good works, 'This do and thou shalt live.' 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.' He knows very well that no one can do this, when He says it, just as I knew you could not pay a thousand

cents, much less a thousand pounds. But if a man is willing to be saved for *nothing* He says 'only believe.' 'This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.' Do you understand that now?"

"Yes, sah; I tinks so, sah."

All claimed to have religion of some kind or other. One young woman said enthusiastically. "Oh, I'se gwine t' walk de hebenly J'ruslem wid my feet shod wid de golding banner o' lub!"

Some of them possessed strange family names. One was Wm. Wildgoose; another Nehemiah Bowleg. These curious names probably originated in the days of slavery, when the master gave the newly landed slaves any name they chose, though they were usually called after the name of their owners.

He was sometimes questioned by them

as to his age, birthplace, etc. He sometimes told them he was born in the state of New York and in the state of Indiana. Also that he was born thirty years ago, and ten years ago. This always created looks of half doubt and amazement, till he explained to them the difference between the first and the second, or "new birth." Much good was accomplished by these door-yard conversations. Curtsies and salutations were lavished upon him, and he was called "minista" in spite of himself.

Though many of them seemed hopelessly dense, he took courage from the text, "Sow ye beside all waters," and flooded the town with tracts and gospel papers.

CHAPTER XI.

A Sail to Morgan's Bluff.

MR. and Mrs. Grant made many friends among the more intelligent white population of Dunmore. In their afternoon walks about town they often stopped to chat with the farmers, fishermen, and ship carpenters, whose day's work ended at four o'clock, and who usually spent the remainder of the day lounging about in groups in the shade of buildings or almond-trees. They were, as a rule, very polite, and were never heard to swear.

Mrs. Grant was especially attracted to the old retired sea captains, who

seemed never to tire of telling thrilling yarns of fearful wrecks and terrific hurricanes, in which they had figured prominently.

One day the Christian captain of one of the fishing smacks belonging to Dunmore offered to take Mr. Grant and any others to a small colored settlement about fifteen miles off called Morgan's Bluff, (after a seventeenth century West Indian pirate of that name). Mr. Grant proposed to take a party and have an open-air meeting with the inhabitants there. Myrtie and Elaine were delighted at the idea, and on the following Friday, after an early dinner, a party of fifty or sixty (men, women, children, and babies) set sail for "the Bluff," as it was called, in the smack "Invincible." Some, as usually happens on such occasions, were late, and just reached the wharf as the

vessel tacked out of the harbor. "That is just how it will be when the Lord comes again," remarked Mr. Grant, as the crowd on deck waved handkerchiefs and hats and shouted, "Good-by," to the disappointed ones on the wharf. "Many expect to be saved some day, but put off getting ready like our disappointed friends on shore. And I fear many will knock at mercy's door too late."

They reached the harbor of Morgan's Bluff in safety after a two hours pleasant sail. Word of their coming had been sent on before, and, as they passed through the bottle-necked harbor's mouth, shouts were heard on shore, "De 'Convincible's comin!" "De minista come," etc. A crowd soon collected to greet them and help them ashore. On landing, they agreed upon a spot and hour for the preaching, and

then scattered, some to hunt for oranges and West Indian plums, others who had never been there before to stroll about the place, and a few, with Mr. Grant, to search for a drink of good water,—a scarce article everywhere in the Bahamas. The people were too poor to have "tanks" (cisterns), and there was nothing to do but drink what they call "spring" water, which is not *spring* water at all, but brackish sea-water obtained from wells dug in the sand, or hewn out of the coarse, porous rock.

A bright little black boy offered to supply them out of his mother's well, but he was so anxious to serve the visitors (animated, no doubt, by visions of prospective "coppers") that in his haste his foot slipped at the brink of the well, and down he plunged, feet foremost, fortunately. He was soon fished out

unhurt, though badly scared. He was solaced by Mr. Grant with a bit of silver, and he probably thought that tumbling into wells was not such bad business after all, provided always one could land on his feet, and have sympathizing white folks, with purses in their pockets at the time. They had to go elsewhere, of course, after water.

A good crowd collected at the hour appointed for the preaching. Mr. Grant, who was peculiarly gifted for out-door preaching, spoke with marked power, and, at the close, a seemingly half drunk fellow came up to him, and grasping his hand, commenced to bawl and bellow at a great rate, saying God had saved him during the address. Mr. Grant hardly knew how to take his cryings and professions of repentance, and asked someone aside, "Is he intoxicated?"

The man's friends assured Mr. Grant that he had not been drinking, and looked considerably awe-struck. But he had no time to inquire further, as it was getting towards sunset, and Capt. Sweeting was anxious to get away.

Some were behind time again, but of course they could not leave anyone at *this* end of the voyage, so all were made to wait on two or three stragglers. At last they came, just as the sun was setting in a bank of black storm-clouds. The captain looked anxiously at the sky, and ordered all the women and children to go below. Mrs. Grant became somewhat alarmed, and asked Capt. Sweeting if he thought they should have a hurricane. "Oh no," he said, "not this time o' year. August, September, and October are the 'hurricane months,' and we never have them in winter. But I

fear the wind is going round and we are in for a no'ther" (norther). "Do you think there is any danger?" she asked anxiously. "No," he said, "only it may be rough, and we may have some heavy seas, so you had better go below so as not to get wet up."

They were soon out of the harbor, and bounding homewards over the foaming sea. The wind shifted not long after they started, and it began to rain a little. There was more or less confusion on deck, as on these pleasure voyages nearly everyone gives orders as if he were captain, and some were shouting one thing and some another. The wind blew fiercely for a time, and this, with the deepening darkness, and the shouting of the men above, frightened the women and children in the cabin, and they commenced to cry and scream.

There were a few, like Mrs. Grant and Myrtie, who were not at all afraid.

"How nice it is," said Mrs. Grant, "to be a real believer and to know that we are in our heavenly Father's hands. Scripture says, He holds the wind in His fists and the waters in the hollow of His hands." This and other things she said had a soothing effect on the more timid ones of the company. Matters became arranged on deck too. A big, fat, good-natured man named Walter Pindar took the helm, and another man, whose eyes were sharp and who knew the way to the harbor well, acted as lookout and pilot in the bow. They could hear him from the cabin crying first, "Luff!" then, "Keep off a little!" and then, "Steady!"

Lanterns were lighted below and they commenced to sing gospel hymns and

converse as calmly as if they were on their verandas at home. About nine o'clock they reached Dunmore harbor, without mishap, but just before they reached the wharf, the vessel ran aground on a sand-bar. There was some friendly disputing as to who was to blame for the accident, which ended in the "poor sailoring" being laid to the captain's charge. But the rising tide soon floated her off, and a few minutes later they were safely landed on the wharf. Capt. Moseley stood in the crowd awaiting their arrival. He had become a little anxious at the sudden change in the weather and as they did not get home at the hour at which he looked for them, he had walked down to the pier to make inquiries. He was very fond of Myrtie, and was glad to have her safely home again. She was

growing up a fine, cheery, useful girl and he was justly proud of her.

She told him all the incidents of the voyage, as they walked home together with Mr. and Mrs. Grant, and then re-told them to her mother at the tea-table. They retired later than usual that night, and as she knelt in prayer at her bed-side Myrtie did not forget to ask God's special blessing on the gospel preached that day at Morgan's Bluff.

CHAPTER XII.

Farewell to Dunmore.

MYRTIE and Mrs. Grant often went calling together among the better class white families, and Mrs. Grant was surprised to find them so very polite and intelligent, in spite of their isolation and infrequent intercourse with strangers. This was largely due, she believed, to the influence of the English church and Wesleyan ministers and their wives who lived among them, and who were nearly all from England or Ireland.

One day they called on Mrs. Giles, at the rectory, who told them of some of her earlier experiences among the Islands. She said when she first came out

from England with her husband, sixteen years ago, she supposed that, he being a missionary, the natives must all be savages. They landed on the island of San Salvador, and as she stepped on shore with her first baby in her arms, a big black woman came forward and taking the child out of her arms, hurried off with it through the bushes. She was terribly frightened, she said, and called to her husband, for, for all that she knew, the woman was a cannibal, and was about to make a meal of her infant. He only smiled and led the way to the mission-house in the bush, where she found her infant daughter and its voluntary nurse awaiting them. She said, too, that when she first saw the white-washed, dome-shaped ovens in the people's yards, she thought honey must be very plentiful, as nearly everybody

seemed to keep a hive of bees. She afterwards learned that nobody kept bees in the Bahamas outside of Nassau, and nearly all the honey eaten in the colony was imported.

They made frequent visits to the colored section of the town, and Mrs. Grant found that the older ones who had been slaves were by far the most intelligent and respectable. But both she and her husband found the race a study. They appeared affectionate and obliging, but nearly all were very fickle and quite untrustworthy. They were all very religious, and everybody among the males called the other "brudder." It was not uncommon to hear two, in their fiercest quarrels, calling each other "nigga," "low, brack man," and every opprobrious name imaginable, while making all sorts of horrible threats in

high-pitched tones, and at the same time addressing each other as "brudder." They rarely came to blows, and usually took revenge by cutting away the other's boat, throwing overboard the ballast, or setting fire to the offending "brudder's" fields.

The females usually used very affectionate terms in addressing one another, something after the following manner:

"How de, honey?"

"Oh, I well, dea.' How yo'?"

"So, so, tank e."

Or, "How yo' feelin dis mo'nin', lub?"

"Oh, not too well, da'lin'. How yo' feel?"

"I feel bad, bad. Las' night I took e draff in chapel, and dis mo'nin' I got e bad pain i' mi lef' side, 'cross mi ches'" (across my chest).

But these endearing terms, like the

"brudder" of the men, did not mean much, for they sometimes fought pitched battles in which sticks of sugar-cane were the principal weapons. On such occasions the yards or alleys where the fight was on were always in a great uproar, the combatants whacking each other energetically with their sugar-cane rods, shouting and screaming at the top of their voices, with all the dogs in the neighborhood yelping, howling, and barking, added to which were the cries of encouragement or cheers from the friends of the belligerents, gathered around. These battles nearly always ended in a compromise, the contestants retreating to their respective "yards," muttering terrible imprecations and casting frequent fiery glances at the retiring foe.

They were all extremely fond of sing-

ing "antems" (as they called hymns of any kind) and their whole ambition seemed to be to make as much noise as possible, though many of them had really fine bass and tenor voices. Once in the shipyard, when Mr. Grant raised a tune rather high, an old "kia-leada" (choir-leader) remarked that it was "too strainy."

He had to be extremely careful not to allow himself to become too familiar with them. When he first came to Dunmore he used to nod familiarly to everyone he met, but he soon learned that this would not do at all. Such were their peculiar ideas as to what constitutes a real "gemmen" that he had to be very sparing of his salutations and and give those he knew only the barest nod of recognition and pass the others by unnoticed. This made a greeting

from the "minista" greatly appreciated. They coveted tokens of recognition thus sparingly given, but which, had he continued to bestow as liberally as at the beginning, they would have very slightly valued. Capt. Moseley told him that the pure blacks did not expect to receive the same kind of treatment, socially, as white people, and thought less of any one who accorded it to them.

But with all this, numbers of them were real Christians, and these Mr. and Mrs. Grant recognized as brothers and sisters in the Lord. Both church and chapel had mixed congregations, but the colored portion had a section of the building (usually one side) allotted to them, and were not allowed to sit among the whites.

So with visiting, strolling, bathing and boating, and preachings every

Lord's Day in the shipyard, the time passed rapidly by, and at last the day arrived for the visitors to leave for their northern home. The mail schooner "Ideal" lay waiting at the pier-head, while the trunks and boxes of native hats, mats, sponges and sea-shells were being put aboard.

It was a time of real sorrow to Myrtie, for she felt that, under God, she owed more to them than she could ever possibly forget or hope to repay. It was from Mr. Grant that she first heard the simple gospel, and all that she knew of a really spiritual nature she had learned with his help and that of his gentle wife. She could hardly keep back the tears at the breakfast table, and as soon as it was over retired to her chamber to weep alone. Presently Mrs. Grant tapped at the door and told her they

were about to start. Seeing the child in tears, she put her arms about her, and kissing her, said tenderly, "Don't feel too bad, dear. I will write you often, and you will have your Bible and the Holy Spirit as your comforter. We may meet again on earth if it be God's will; if not we are sure to meet in heaven with our precious Saviour." After she had succeeded in soothing her somewhat, they started down towards the wharf, where they found quite a crowd gathered to see them off. Elaine walked with them, and she too found it hard work to keep back her tears.

Mr. Grant, as was expected, made them a short speech, after which he shook hands all round, and then rescuing his wife from the embraces of the weeping school-girls and their mothers, they stepped on board the vessel and

were off. Handkerchiefs were waved until they could only be seen with glasses, and when the vessel could no longer be seen from the upper veranda at Greycliffe, Myrtie and Elaine went to the highest hill-top on the island, and with Capt. Moseley's powerful telescope, watched the schooner until she was lost to even the telescope's searching eye in the haze of the distant horizon. They sat and sobbed together for a full half hour and then sadly returned to Dunmore.

How different Greycliffe looked, now that the visitors were gone, and Mr. Grant's cheery voice was no longer heard about the house and his wife's loving presence no longer felt. But, as Mrs. Grant had said, Myrtie had her precious Bible, and God's Holy Spirit to guide and comfort her, though she

did miss the shipyard preachings, and Mrs. Grant's loving advice and counsel so much.

There is little more to write of Myrtie Moseley. She heard from the Grants by almost every mail, and was glad to be able to write them that she and Elaine and most of the others were holding on their way, "faint, yet pursuing." Richard turned out badly, and Capt. Moseley had to turn him away for gambling. Myrtie read 1 John ii. 19 and knew by that, that the root of the matter had never been in him. She read with confidence and comfort the words of Jesus in the tenth of John: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any [man, angel, or devil] pluck them out of My hand. My Father,

which gave them Me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one."

This, gentle reader, is the story of MYRTIE MOSELEY AND HER FRIENDS.

ERRATUM, Page 71.

For "which was burnt 47 years before Christ"
read —"burnt in the year A. D. 641."

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